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Letter from the Editor

Though the theme of this edition is trauma, our work this month has been as focused on what builds us up as what breaks us down. Our whole team has been left marveling at the power of bearing witness to each other’s lives.

Since April I’ve been working with the North News “Trauma Troopers” to produce this issue of the newspaper. These four young women from the Northside have been reporting on how trauma has impacted the lives of their peers, using the principles of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). They've practiced, more than 50 times now, the intentional act of convening young people to talk about the hardest events and experiences of their lives, some for the very first time. They’ve been trusted to hold the horrors and the triumphs that belong to young people in Minneapolis.

Disclosure is risky. It cracks us open. It makes our deepest wounds visible and makes us vulnerable to dissection. But for all its power to hurt us more, it also offers a path to healing. Our team has cried as much as we’ve laughed while doing this work (see photo to the right). We’ve experienced as much strength as brokenness and as much connection as alienation.

From this finished product, produced by the Trauma Troopers (one of which gave birth to a healthy baby girl less than a week before this paper went to print), two realities are clear to me: our youth are so resilient, and they need more support from us. Read what they had to say and what youth artist Andre Broadnax had to draw beginning on Page 9. This whole package was envisioned and produced by the Trauma Troopers. Editorial control was entirely in their hands.

Infinite thanks to community artist Nikki McComb and folks from The Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) program at the City of Minneapolis, particularly Desralynn Cole and Joy Marsh Stephens. Your support allowed us to do this urgent work at an incredible size and scale for a small community newspaper.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Elect Blong Yang! We had the privilege to know Blong Yang when he was on the Minneapolis City Council. He worked on many issues to strengthen North Minneapolis. Now, he has the opportunity to work on issues at the county level. We support Blong for Hennepin County Commissioner because not only was he a former recipient of county services, he has the experience for the job. His work as an attorney, civil rights investigator, and Minneapolis City Council member will translate well to the county board.

Blong spent four years on the Minneapolis City Council where he chaired the Public Safety Committee, securing funding for body cameras. He resurrected the $1 Housing Program and spearheaded the Infill Housing Program which saved almost 100 homes from demolition and converted them into new rehabbed homes. He, along with other council members, approved an annual budget of $1.2 billion.

Blong's background dealing with adversity and his work experience will translate nicely to the county board. We want a county commissioner who will look out for the interests of all the residents of District 2. A county commissioner who is fiscally responsible. Blong is that and more. That’s why we’re supporting Blong Yang for Hennepin County Commissioner. We encourage you to do the same.

May Ly and Tommy Thao, 1419 26th Ave N

North News welcomes letters to the editor. Please send to kenzieo@pillsburyunited.org or to North News, 125 W Broadway Suite 130, Minneapolis, MN 55411. They must be signed, under 300 words, and relevant to life in North Minneapolis.
Prepare now to vote in November

Early voting for the Nov. 6 general elections began Sept. 21. While people can register to vote at the polls, pre-registering makes voting on Election Day a faster process. Voters can check the status of their registrations at vote.minneapolismn.gov/voters/register. Anyone who has moved to a new address or had a name change since last registering will need to re-register. Voters who haven’t voted in the past four years also must re-register to vote this November. People can pre-register online or fill out and mail in a registration application, which are available at government offices and online. Applications need to be submitted by Oct. 16. Voters can register at the polls and vote on Election Day if they miss the pre-registration deadline. Stop by Sumner Library (611 Van White Memorial Blvd) on Oct. 29 from 4:30pm-6:30pm to register to vote, find your polling place, and get voting and election questions answered.

Opportunities to hear from local political candidates

With the Nov. 6 election just weeks away, now is the time to get engaged and hear what the candidates have to say at upcoming debates and forums:

A MPS Board of Education candidate debate will be held on Oct. 2 from 7:15pm-9pm at South High School (3131 19th Ave S.). The debate will be hosted by the League of Women Voters. At-large candidates, as well as candidates from districts 1, 3, and 5 will be participating. The event is open to the public.

Unbound, a project of the Graves Foundation and Pollen Studios, is hosting a forum for at-large school board candidates. The forum will be held Oct. 22, 6:30pm-8:30pm, at Mixed Blood Theatre Company (1501 S 4th St.).

BlackVotesMatterMN will be hosting a debate between candidates for the Hennepin County District Attorney race. The debate will be held Oct. 9, at the Minneapolis Urban League, from 6pm-8pm.

NCJW Minnesota, Jewish Community Action, the League of Women Voters Minnesota, and the ACLU of Minnesota will be hosting a Hennepin County Attorney candidate forum on Oct. 23. The forum will be held at North High School from 6:30pm-8:15pm.

Estes Funeral Home announces grand opening

Estes Funeral Chapel and Cremation Services has announced the grand opening for its new location (2201 Plymouth Ave N). The event will take place Oct. 14 from 2pm-5pm. Estes Funeral Home and Cremation Services is Minneapolis’ only African American owned funeral home. The business has been in operation since 1962.

Minneapolis Park Board seeking public comment on parks plan

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is seeking public comment on a draft version of the North Service Area Master Plan (NSAMP). Public comments are welcome all the way through Oct. 27. NSAMP reflects community desires for all outdoor facilities in more than 30 North Minneapolis neighborhood parks and regional trails, and it will guide capital improvements over the next 20 to 30 years at these locations. Right now, the plans are strictly visioning documents; there is no funding currently in place for them. You can review the draft plan online (https://www.minneapolisparks.org/park_care_improvements/park_projects/current_projects/north_service_area_master_plan/) or view print copies at local recreation centers or MPRB headquarters. To submit comments you must complete an online survey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NSAMPDraft) or fill out a paper survey at a local recreation center or MPRB headquarters. Following the public comment period, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) will compile all comments, modify the plan and present the revised version to the Board of Commissioners for possible adoption. A public hearing will take place at that time.

GAF announces $4 million investment into plant operations

GAF, a roofing and shingles company located on the West side of the Lowry Bridge, has announced a $4 million investment into a regenerative thermal oxidizer, an industrial machine used to treat emissions. The RTO, according to GAF Plant Manager Aric Arneson, is “part of a broader effort to continually assess and reduce GAF’s environmental footprint.” GAF been the subject of much consternation within North Minneapolis, due to both plant emissions and odors released. “The RTO is the gold standard for emissions control. It will dramatically reduce emissions and odor,” said Arneson.

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Onyx Collective celebrates traditional African-American cuisine

Jessica Enwesi | Contributor

On Sept. 14, an organization hoping to serve an amalgam of knowledge and Southern cooking, hosted their last popup shop in North Minneapolis and reintroduced the community to a nearly forgotten history.

The Onyx Culinary Collective (OCC) is a group of chefs and “food enthusiasts” who travel around the country and educate guests through a series of events that explore the history behind traditional African-American foods and their intimate link to Black cultural identity.

The OCC is a part of a network of organizations and restaurants, such as Silvia’s in Harlem, New York, and Pascal’s in Atlanta, Georgia, that aims to highlight foods and customs shared by African-Americans.

According to Tene Wells, a chef and the manager of the OCC, she and her colleagues chose to host their event in North Minneapolis because they feel there are limited soul food options in the city.

“A lot of people don’t know about a lot of this. We want to let people here in the community know about the history of African-American cuisine and the traditions that were passed on from one generation to the next,” Wells said.

Since early June, the group has been hosting these pop-up events, every second Tuesday of the month, inside the Breaking Bread Cafe and Catering restaurant in North Minneapolis.

In addition to serving traditional meals, the OCC also centers the event around a chosen theme.

From simple dinner parties inspired by African-American family reunions to intricate meals that reflect the food preferences of the late-Minneapolis native and artist Prince, the OCC has tried it all.

The group even hosted an event that explored the intersection of African-American and Native-American cuisines and produced a soul food-inspired taco.

To celebrate the end of their occupancy in the restaurant, the OCC concluded their series with a theme and meal that paid homage to the Great Migration of African-Americans to the North USA and the book that helped them along their journey.

According to Wells, African-Americans often traded stories about their travel experiences and subsequently created a guidebook that would outline places that served food and offered lodging options for black people. This book was known as the Green-book.

The Green-book was not only able to offer services for African-Americans, it also guided people on what they should travel with.

“Between 1910 and 1970, millions of African-Americans migrated to the North for better opportunities and (a better) quality of life. (In order) to do that, they had to travel with foods that wouldn’t spoil easily,” said Wells.

According to Wells, they could only carry collard greens, chickens, flour for cornbread and other foods that could maintain a long shelf life.

For this reason, guests attending OCC’s last Minneapolis event were able to enjoy golden brown pieces of fried chicken, stewed collard greens, black-eyed pea soup, cornbread and other traditional items.

While the North Minneapolis event has come to a close, Wells is positive they will popup back again, and the purpose will remain the same.

“We’re doing this because it’s important for people to know this history,” said Wells. “We just want to put our time, talent and treasures into these types of (events) and do something good and that matters.”
Minneapolis City Council members Phillipe Cunningham (Ward 4) and Jeremiah Ellison (Ward 5) were inaugurated in January 2018. *North News* has invited them to keep in touch with the community through this monthly column in our newspaper.

### WARD 4: Phillipe Cunningham

My office in conjunction with an interdepartmental staff team and external stakeholders have been working on the Conduct on Licensed Premises Ordinance since March 2018. This work was not to eliminate the ordinance but rather to enhance it and provide clarity to the language, consistency to the work, and resources to both landlords and tenants. This work was done through an equity lens and will provide better outcomes moving forward.

Many of you have heard about this work and we are ready to unveil what systems change looks like, walk you through the changes, and answer any questions that you have ahead of the upcoming presentation and public hearing.

Please join us on Friday October 5th from 530p to 730p at UROC for an exhibition style engagement session. You can also attend the full presentation and public comment on October 9th at 130pm at City Hall, 3rd floor council chambers. If you cannot attend either event, please send comments to council-comment@minneapolismn.gov.

### WARD 5: Jeremiah Ellison

Last month, I went a little in-depth about the Emergency Stabilization Pilot Program—a program designed to support our most vulnerable tenants against slumlords. But I think it’s important that we have a quick conversation about the root of the problem.

First, let’s talk about the housing crisis. There is currently a large wave of people wanting to move into the city of Minneapolis—think White Flight, but the reverse of that—and there is not enough housing to fit everyone. There are some complicated things at work, but even a simple supply-vs-demand analysis tells us that the price of housing will go up... and it has. This puts Northsiders at risk of displacement. Recently, my office has been getting a wave of calls from neighbors about being displaced. The good news is my office can help! The bad news is we’re often getting these calls too late—at the point where intervention is difficult or impossible, and I want to change that.

If you’re having difficulties with your landlord—for example, they’re not completing repair requests—make sure to reach out to Legal Aid (612-332-1441) and HomeLine (612-728-5767) before getting into a real back and forth with your landlord. We’ve gotten reports of some pretty bad landlord behavior, but certain actions—like not paying your rent—can feel like powerful moves but will end up hurting you more than your landlord. There are ways to withhold rent legally, but again, reach out to Legal Aide or HomeLine for some direction.

Evictions are a plague on the Northside and taking the wrong actions to hold your landlord accountable can speed up an eviction instead of slowing it down. In addition to getting good legal advice, please reach out to my office. We want to be able to track potential displacement and stop it if we can. It’s my job to serve the residents of Ward 5. If nothing else, my office will work to keep people in their homes at all cost. So, call us.

Homelessness has been a huge topic of conversation in the City recently—with the Hiawatha encampment forcing us to have a conversation that many have ignored. I could go on about homelessness (and plan to in the future), but I want to say that the housing crisis has a direct connection to homelessness. With limited options for housing, landlords are more empowered than ever—most use this power responsibly and provide a good service for their tenants. But, increasingly, we’re seeing our neighbors mistreated by opportunistic landlords—many of whom don’t live here and only seek to profit off a hot market, no matter the cost to our neighbors.

This is just the beginning of a long and difficult fight to prevent displacement and homelessness in Ward 5. Thank you, and as always, I look forward to seeing you out in the community! Call my office at 612-673-2205 or email me at ward5@minneapolismn.gov.
Serving Northside schools: does designation help or hurt?

MPS has replaced its school ranking system with the North Star Excellence and Equity System. It measures test results, academic progress, English learner proficiency, and attendance in order to provide parents, schools, and districts with a more well-rounded understanding of the state of their schools. But, according to many educators, the system hurts more than it helps, and some district officials say designation has an outsized impact that fails to consider the work being done by schools to improve.

Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

An Aug. 30 Facebook post from Lucy Laney Elementary School joyfully announced that the school was no longer classified as one of Minnesota’s lowest-performing schools. By the next day, the celebrations had morphed into tears. The school announced in a brief but somber post that a clerical error had been made and the school was still on the list, despite making gains in terms of attendance and test scores. The clerical error also impacted Nellie Stone Johnson and Green Central and was the result of information that was inputted incorrectly into the school’s new school ranking system, the North Star Excellence and Equity System.

The new system ranks Minnesota’s public schools and targets the 5% of schools deemed lowest performing by categorizing them as needing support, targeted support, or comprehensive support. It replaces the State of Minnesota’s former Multiple Measurements Rating system, which was the result of No Child Left Behind. North Star is the result of both the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ECSA) (in short, a newer version of NCLB) signed under former President Barack Obama in 2015 and the state’s World’s Best Workforce legislation, passed in 2013 and revised in 2016.

According to Lucy Laney Principal Mauri Friestleben, however, the system sets up schools like hers to fail. “There is always going to be the lowest 5%. There will always be identified schools. There will always be a failing schools list,” said Friestleben who believes the system does not recognize the impacts of Minnesota’s opportunity gap on schools like Lucy Laney. “We need to understand that as long as our Black and Native American students are the lowest performing students in the state, then our schools that serve predominantly our Black and Native American students are going to be the lowest performing schools in the state.”

Several Northside schools have been targeted as some of the lowest performing schools in the state.

“It’s another tool for us to look at the work that is happening in our schools, MPS initiatives, and how that work is being received,” said Cecilia Saddler, Deputy Chief of Academics, Leadership, and Learning for Minneapolis Public Schools.

North Star was implemented for the first time this school year. It differs from the previous system because North Star system considers a few measurements, rather than only annual test results. It analyzes changes in test results over several years (“academic progress”), as well as progress towards English language proficiency, academic achievement (annual test scores), graduation rates, and consistent attendance.

According to Friestleben, the statewide designation also has a psychological impact on educators and parents.

“We can tell ourselves and everyone else that ultimately it is one peek into what a school is, and that’s true. But it’s also one more reminder that this state seems to be unwilling or unable to address its failures, because as long as you have this lowest 5%, you have losers,” said Friestleben who explains that too often parents and their children visit schools like Lucy Laney and consider sending their children there, but choose not to enroll once they learn about the school’s designation.

But, according to MPS at-large Director Rebecca Gagnon, the statewide designation is not the end-all and be-all for MPS.

“We really haven’t talked about district goals in relation to the new North Star system. What we have been doing is trying to develop our own district-wide definition of accountability, and how we know and communicate that back to the community,” said Gagnon. “We are much more interested in adhering to mea-
The party of the second part hereby agrees that the premises hereby conveyed shall not at any time be conveyed, mortgaged or leased to any person or persons of Chinese, Japanese, Moorish, Turkish, Negro, Mongolian or African blood or descent. Said restrictions and covenants shall run with the land and any breach of any or either thereof shall work a forfeiture of title, which may be enforced by re-entry.
The school board report

Our education reporter brings you the latest news from MPS

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

The MPS Board is busy this fall, campaigning around both referendum questions and discussing the Comprehensive Assessment & Design. Here’s what you need to know:

The MPS Board of Directors met for a retreat on Sept. 8 to discuss comprehensive assessment and design, as well as integration and segregation, as it relates to topics including transportation and academic design. According to data presented in the meeting, results from the most recent Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment show that the majority of white MPS students are proficient in readings, while MPS students of color are not. Discussions on integration and comprehensive assessment and design are continuing.

MPS administrators and Board members are continuing to campaign around two referendum questions approved for the November elections ballot in early August. Minneapolis’ November 2018 general election ballot will include two questions related to school funding, in terms of both general operating funds and the second, a “tech levy,” which would provide funding for current technology-related expenses. For more information visit www.mpls.k12.mn.us/referendum.

A MSP Board of Education candidate debate will be held on Oct. 2 from 7:15pm - 9pm at South High School (3131 19th Ave S.). The debate will be hosted by the League of Women Voters. At-large candidates, as well as candidates from districts 1, 3, and 5 will be participating and the event is open to the public.

There will be no school for MPS students from Oct. 17-Oct. 19. and Nov. 1-Nov. 2.

The MPS Board business meeting is scheduled for Oct. 9 from 5:30pm-8pm at the Davis Center (1250 West Broadway Ave). Committee of the Whole will be held on Oct. 23 from 6pm-8pm at the Davis Center.

Educator Spotlight:
Valerie Matthews

By Cirien Saadeh | Staff Reporter

Valerie Matthews is a longtime Early Childhood & Family Education parent educator who has taught at the Mona Moede Early Learning Center (2410 Girard Ave N) for the past 25 years. A natural storyteller with a Master’s in Education from the University of Minnesota, she works with both parents and young children (birth-5) to help prepare them for the children’s first years at school. She was nominated for September’s Educator Spotlight by her peers because of her work “tirelessly designing and facilitating programming which is culturally relevant and accessible to Northside families.”

What do you enjoy about your work? I was born in Jamaica and moved to Minnesota to get my master’s in education from the University of Minnesota and that’s where I learned about family education. I enjoy getting the opportunity to work with families of diverse backgrounds. It’s so important to be able to embrace families from different cultures and to learn from them about how child development impacts their children in relation to their culture. How has it impacted or affected the culture they’re now living in? It gives me great satisfaction to know I have an opportunity to be able to help parents navigate the systems, hear their side, give them the knowledge of the expectations that are here and how they can help their children be successful in school.

What is your teaching philosophy? That every child can learn and that every adult has potential. We just need to meet them where they are at. The early childhood teacher and I go to a nearby homeless shelter. We go there once a week and carry the same teaching strategies to them in their space. We meet them where they are at. Whatever we do on site in our classroom we take it there. You just need to know that regardless of your circumstance, you have the power in you to do the right thing for your children and to be able to get your children off to a great start. That’s our goal. So for me, meet parents where they’re at, every parent has potential to learn and every parent wants the best for their children. Regardless of circumstance. Regardless of language. Regardless of socioeconomic status. The same need. I want my child to be successful.

What is your favorite teaching moment? My favorite teaching moment is when I have the opportunity to teach on the spot. When a child is perhaps having a moment, an acting up moment, and to be able to walk over in the classroom or out in the stores. I wear my hat wherever I go, and my antennas are always up for young kids and to see how they’re doing. Oh, that’s a very sociable kid, or that child is maybe a little cautious. So my greatest moments are when I can, right on the spot, help a parent get over a moment or a situation that could have escalated and provide them with a strategy. When I can step in and lend a hand rather than judging them.

Designation from Page 6

Surements that are more meaningful in terms of measuring student achievement.” According to Gagnon, those indicators include class size, classroom practices, school culture, and the work that schools put in over the years to improve. “There are measurements that happen and that actually impact the experience in the classroom, the school, and the district,” said Gagnon.

According to critics of the new system, the labels used are an oversimplification of what is actually happening. “It is very frustrating when you see the success of schools that are growing every year still designated as failing. We don’t have failing schools. We have students that need a lot of support and may not come into kindergarten prepared. I wish we could go to accountability systems that help communities and schools understand where they are, where they are in reference to the past 3-5 years, and then we can have those conversations,” said Gagnon.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Director of Communications Josh Collins says the North Star system is meant to be a tool for parents and districts. North Star uses its categories to provide “support” to educators, which comes in several forms including curricular direction and even shifting teachers or principals around.

“North Star gives information to parents about how their schools are doing, but I think the most important thing is what they do with that information. Are they going to school board meetings? Are they making sure the District is taking action? Are they working with principals and teachers?” said Collins. “When we talk about accountability for schools, we’re talking about our schools, our teachers, our systems, in order to make sure that they are serving all students, not just some students. The system is designed to help us provide more help and put resources where they are needed the most.”

For more information on the North Star system, visit: http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/essa.
Since May, the North News “Trauma Troopers,” a team of youth reporters from North Minneapolis, have been having conversations with their peers about their lives, their pain, and their efforts to heal from their trauma.

By Ashley Powell, Myesha Powell, Naja “Star” McComb, and Caprice Whimper

Illustrations by Andre Broadnax, a youth artist based in North Minneapolis
LETTER FROM
THE TROOPERS

Hello,

Back in April we all met through this project. Ashley Powell and Myesha Powell were intern reporters for North News. Naja “Star” McComb and Caprice Whimper were youth outreach workers for the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB). Together we knew we could handle this project, which asked us to help the community and City’s ReCAST program understand some of our most traumatized youth.

We came up with eight interview questions and had conversations with more than 50 youth this summer. Being “Trauma Troopers” (the name we came up for ourselves) while having our own trauma is really tough. Our own stories would slip out as we heard them from others. Having this opportunity to hear others express their trauma helped us explain and understand our own tremendously. Hearing other people’s hard stories has made it easier to talk about our own. We don’t feel alone now that we’ve heard so many stories.

Through this project, we learned that trauma comes in many shapes, sizes, and forms. We weren’t surprised by what youth said, but we were surprised by how many of them aren’t dealing with their trauma at all. A lot of youth don’t know that what they have been through is traumatic. They think that what they’re experiencing is normal. In some cases, our conversations helped them see that what they’ve been through is traumatic.

Our youth need more outlets like this one, where they can freely express how they feel and the things they are going through. They need adults in spaces where they are frequently who can relate to and understand the things they are going through. They need adults who will allow them to get everything off their chests without feeling like the adults will just write them off as being children. Youth need better advocates.

We hope the information we gathered here is cast far and wide. Trauma is getting worse. Teenagers need help. People are dying. We need more programs and resources. Youth need better advocacy.

Thank you for reading,

The Trauma Troopers
Ashley Powell, Myesha Powell, Caprice Whimper, and Naja “Star” McComb

Caprice Whimper, 25
Caprice lives in North Minneapolis. She has been a youth outreach worker for the Youth Coordinating Board for three years. She is very passionate about enriching young minds and helping young people get through trauma. She’s gone through multiple trainings for trauma/crisis management and is also a certified medical assistant. Her brother being taken from her in high school due to gun violence motivated her to become a youth worker. His death and the fact that her nieces and nephews would be left without a father made her step up and awakened her passion for youth work. From that point on, she has been dedicated to showing the youth that their historical or family trauma does not and will not define who they grow to be.

Naja McComb, 24
Naja also known as “Star” lives in North Minneapolis. She is currently a youth worker with the Youth Coordinating Board. Star has a deep passion for the arts, specifically music, poetry and dance. When she was 17 years old, her friend was fatally shot on the 4th of July. In response, she founded Hood Nerds Youth Inc. so she could be a part of curbing the violent gun crimes by young people in the community. As Star moved along in her journey she made a few bad choices that landed her in the criminal justice system for a moment. After the trauma of this experience, she vowed to be the reason other young people in her community would make better choices.

Myesha Powell, 18
Myesha is a Near North resident. She is currently a senior at North High School. She hopes to attend St. Thomas University for their journalism program when she graduates. She loves to write and take photographs. Writing is like art to her; she loves expressing herself in so many ways and getting to inform people about issues they don’t know are happening. She got involved with this project because she knows what it feels like to have situations replay in your head over and over again. Everyone is different, and she wanted to see how others handle their trauma while being a listening ear and helping people get through what they are facing.

Ashley Powell, 18
Ashley is a Near North resident. She graduated from North High School in 2018. She lives with her mother Eileen and younger sister. She moved to Minnesota seven years ago due to lack of water in her house in Chicago. They experienced eviction and came to Minnesota, where they started their life in two shelters. After finding housing, they faced another eviction. Ashley is currently planning to attend Harris Stowe University in the Spring. She got involved with this project because her family has been through so many obstacles and she knows the struggle. She hopes to better her family as fast as she can.

This [work] was developed [in part] under grant number 1H79SM063520-01 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is uncontrollable. It affects you forever. It is passed on generationally. Trauma can be caused by losing something or someone important, going through bad situations and experiences, and reliving bad memories.

For me, trauma is an uncontrollable abnormal event that takes place, something that is abnormal being something that doesn’t happen on the regular. So something that people shouldn’t have to face. Seeing somebody get killed. Having to be raped, and stuff like that. It’s something that’s going to be un-forgettable and that will affect you mentally or physically for the rest of your life. And that’s what trauma is, and it happens in those uncontrollable situations where you don’t expect it to be happening or where it shouldn’t be happening. It’s out of your control.

It also depends on what your parents went through, like they went through trauma too. There’s things that you pass on to your kids and their kids and vice versa. And stuff that you pass on to others. So a lot of the times, how we take it in the world is how we’re raised in all of that stuff, who our parents are too.

Trauma is something you have to deal with because it is a part of you.

Trauma is an experience that alters someone’s emotional, physical or mental state for the rest of their life.

– TH, 21

I think trauma is just like this hole in your soul that just leaves a big old pain. Every time you look back on it, it strikes you and makes you feel some type of way that can stop you from doing certain things in your life.

– JA, 14

All quotes are verbatim from interviews conducted with Minneapolis youth this summer. For a variety of reasons, some have been granted complete anonymity.
HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH YOUR TRAUMA? CAN YOU GET OVER IT?

Trauma never leaves you – you can learn to live with it and use it as a tool to push forward, but you can’t get over it completely. Some youth deal with their trauma by going to therapy. Some said having a positive attitude and positive energy around you can help you cope. Many do not seem to actively address their trauma at all.

I keep a positive mindset. I always keep a smile on my face even when it’s tough times. I just keep being positive. – KH, 19

I don’t think you’ll get over it, but I think you can get to the point where you know how to deal with it or think of it in a better way. – TS, 18

Telling someone to get over their trauma is like telling a blind person to get over the fact that they’re blind. ‘No, because I can’t see every day and I’m gonna think about it every day because I have to use other senses, other things to help me cope with that feeling, you know?’ It’s sad because a lot of people don’t realize that you try to cope and do different things and mechanisms, and we don’t know how that affects us. – JG, 18

I don’t really deal with it. I push it to the side. I don’t try to think about it. – KH, 19

I think trauma is something that you can get over; it just depends on if you’re willing to make the changes to overcome the hard times. I guess, and overcome the mental or emotional attachment you have to the trauma. …Trauma is something you might not forget, but it is something you can deal with. It might change you forever, but you can definitely work through it.

I deal with trauma by going to therapy but I don’t think it’s ever something somebody can really get over. – LH, 15

I really don’t deal with [my trauma]. I run from it. Sometimes it’s been too deep or too much for me to deal with or I might express it in the art forms that I do. Basically I just take my trauma and I use it to help or want to help someone else. I use my story to make sure that those younger than me don’t have to go through what I went through.

I don’t think you’ll get over it, but I think you can get to the point where you know how to deal with it or think of it in a better way. – TS, 18

With the right help, if you need it, and a lot of effort, I feel like yeah, trauma can be gotten over. Maybe not completely, but 95%. You’re always going to hurt when something happens to you even when it’s small. – TH, 21

RESOURCES YOUTH FIND HELPFUL WHEN DEALING WITH TRAUMA:

- A Mother’s Love
- Teen Health Education Council
- Girls In Action
- College Possible
- YCB Outreach
- School Counselors
- Therapist / Therapy
- Boys & Girls Club
- MADDads
- Family Support
- Young Life
- Beacons
- Man Up Club
- C2i
- Step by Step
- Street Reach
- Church
- Teachers

RESOURCES YOUTH WISH THEY HAD:

- Grief groups or trauma classes
- Mental health resources in school
- Easier access to therapists
- More basketball camps
- More trusted people to talk to in a group setting
- A special place for youth to talk to people (facility)
- Rehab for trauma
- More mental health support
- Mental health mentors
- Activity space/gym membership for youth

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HADES THE EXPERIENCE WITH THE POLICE?

Young people described their experiences with police as overwhelmingly negative. A few young people had positive things to say but they were often surprising exceptions.

THE PERCEIVE POLICE TO BE ABUSING THEIR POWER

It definitely did not take five police officers to get a 12 year old to the ground. – TH, 21

POLICE DON'T SHOW UP FAST ENOUGH UNLESS THERE ARE GUNSHOTS

Over North, police just show up whenever. You call the police [and] they don't show up for a whole hour later. – I, 17

YOUTH WANT TO BE PROTECTED BY POLICE

I want to not have a problem with the police, because in a situation their job is to protect you and make you feel safe in the community. So I personally want to, just in case something happens like I get robbed or I just get somebody trying to kill me, I want to be able to turn to the police and be able to trust that they're going to come rescue me because that's their job. Or at least that's what I've grown up to understand their job to be.

IF YOU GO INTO A SITUATION WITH THE POLICE, WITH YOUR ANGER FRONT AND CENTER, IT WILL END NEGATIVELY

If you handle a situation in the streets with police with emotion, that's what you're going to get.

THEY SAY THEIR TRUST IN POLICE IS SERIOUSLY ERODED

They made me feel like I can't trust police officers, so even when I don't know what they're doing, I don't like being around them.

POLICE ARE DRAGGING KIDS OUT OF THEIR CHILDHOODS

Since they work on the streets they think they can treat kids like adults, which is not the best situation.

HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP HELPS

We've been having experiences with officers for all the years that we've been going to North and being on the team. We look at the officers a lot differently than other people might have because they don't have relationships with them. – TS, 17

When are we going to see the police having good conversations with us?

Have you ever heard the phrase “all cops aren’t bad cops?” That may be true, but that’s hard for many people in our community to believe. Police officers do damage to the community and break homes with no consequences or repairing. How can you put your trust into a police officer when you turn on the news and another African American male has been shot in the back multiple times because he would not stop running?

It seems like the first thing that police do is pull out their guns without knowing if it’s necessary. Having a gun pointed at you in your face is traumatizing, and knowing that they can shoot you and get away with it is even more traumatizing because your family gets no justice.

When one of the young men we interviewed, JG, was a freshmen in high school, he was walking home from the park. It was cold outside so he had on a coat. He saw the police drive past him from the corner of his eye but didn’t pay them any mind until the cop car decided to park at the corner of the block he was walking towards. He wasn’t sure what to expect. Two officers, a white male and white female, approached him, demanding he take his hand out of his pocket. He didn’t know what was going on. Something like this hadn’t ever happened to him before. The officers asked if he had any weapons. They told him they heard there was a gun in the area. He said no. They searched it. They didn’t believe him, and they emptied his bag.

Jeremiah walks with a limp, and he realized the officers thought he had a gun because of the way he was walking. He said the officer asked him why he walked “like that.” Jeremiah told him he had a disability. The officer asked him which disability. Jeremiah pushed back, asking him why he needed to know. He said the officer then got mad, took off Jeremiah’s coat and searched it. They didn’t find anything. They didn’t apologize for getting it wrong. They had stopped him because he was limping, and their automatic thought was that he must have a gun.

Many of us only see police in the community parked in certain places, waiting for the next crime, circling the block more than once, making you feel like your every move is getting watched or you see them on the news because they shot another African American male. When are we going to see the police having good conversations with the youth in our community? When are we going to see police at National Night Out getting engaged with the kids there? The community need to be able to trust the people whose job it is to serve and protect us. The officers need to rebuild trust with the community and make us feel safe to call them knowing that they here to help us. They need to repair the damage they’ve done.
**HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR SAFETY?**

Youth living in North Minneapolis had a lot to say about their feelings of personal safety in the community. Some said that North Minneapolis is their community and their home and because of that they’re not scared of it. Others said they are nervous walking or traveling on the Northside. A lot of students who live outside North said that they feel safe in their communities. Some students don’t feel safe at school and don’t feel respected or safe with teachers. One way young people create safety is by surrounding themselves with positive people. Traveling to and from school is a key time of fearing for safety. The people we interviewed who didn’t have to take the city bus felt safer in general at school. Young people’s identities, being black and being LGBT for example, can make them feel unsafe at times.

I feel unsafe in school, definitely unsafe. Because they got too many officers around with their hand on their gun, waiting to shoot a black kid than actually stopping a fight. – LH, 15

I think I felt more in fear in the neighborhood I used to live in on the Northside. My cousin got shot in our backyard. After that, my mom was like “no, we’re not doing that.” She took that into her own hands. Then we moved to this white neighborhood, like Brooklyn Park. So now neighborhood wise, I still feel safe. I feel like I am safe. But if I am leaving school [at Henry] and I’m going to my car and it’s night, I’m running. I’m really running. – SM, 18

Yeah, the Northside, I mean you get nervous when you’re walking by yourself because you never know what could happen. It could be a stray bullet or something like that; you just never know. – DJ, 18

I feel like over the past five years, it’s become less safe as a community as a whole. But me personally, I associate myself with things that are positive and safe in my own definition, so I feel entirely safe. Other than the fact that I have to take public transportation. – TH, 21

**TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN SOMEONE SAID OR DID SOMETHING THAT HURT YOU**

Often, family caused the hurt, through sexual violence, being on drugs and more. Hurt was caused by outside forces negatively impacting the whole family. Being bullied came up.

So when I first found out my mom was on drugs, man that hurt my feelings like no other.

**HOW DO THE ADULTS AROUND YOU AFFECT YOUR SENSE OF SAFETY?**

Many young people don’t feel comfortable and safe around their families and some of the adults in their communities.

I moved in with my sisters because I wasn’t safe with my mom.

One time in the sixth grade, I had just finished reading aloud in class and this girl sitting next to me said ‘I didn’t think you’d be able to read that well because you’re black.’ In that moment I didn’t stand up for myself and I wasn’t like ‘you’re ignorant, that’s racist.’ I was just like ‘yes.’ Now that I’m older, I recognize more things.

I had to stand up for myself, not just for myself but for the rest of the class. Because I feel like what she was doing wasn’t right. …Teachers always do that. They talk bad about you in front of your face and they don’t realize it has an impact on you. – LH, 15

**TELL US ABOUT A TIME YOU HAD TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF OR WISH YOU HAD**

Most of the responses were about bullying and kid versus adult issues – teachers, a coach, a dance team. Teachers came up repeatedly. It’s hard to be in the middle of an issue between two people. Casual racism is difficult to stand up to.

You gotta learn how to cut the people off because even though they’re family, you can love them still but you can love them from a distance.

[Being a black man], I feel like I always got to be on my guard, really I’ve got to watch how I act. Watch how people see me. I got to make sure I’m cool with everybody. …I can’t be caught black and outside either.

[North Minneapolis is] my hood. That’s my home, and I ain’t going to be scared walking home just because somebody got popped in my hood.

I do respect teachers but they don’t respect me. – Jaylen

You could be at the wrong spot at the wrong time.

To be aware is to be alive in this day and age.

I feel weird because there are a lot of creeps walking around.

– TS, 18

– JK, 16

– Taz

I feel like over the past five years, it’s become less safe as a community as a whole. But me personally, I associate myself with things that are positive and safe in my own definition, so I feel entirely safe. Other than the fact that I have to take public transportation. – TH, 21

– LH, 15

– DJ, 18
Family is everything to me. At a young age, I learned that no matter what, you always take care of family. Watching our younger siblings is one of many unwritten rules in black families. We don’t think nothing of it. We just do it because mama said so.

For some of us, that responsibility has been a form of trauma. My mother had my younger brother when I was twelve. I’d watch him all the time when my mom was working, running errands or just needed a break. It was everything to me to have a baby brother, but as I got older, being the main sibling out of six to “babysit” him started to somewhat get to me. When he was first born, I didn’t mind at all to be the one watching him. Eventually it became my responsibility. I literally was in the house all the time if I wasn’t in school because I’d be watching him. Now looking back, I wish I had just been able to be a kid. Having that responsibility made me grow up faster than I was supposed to as soon as opportunity presented itself.

I gained a lot from having this responsibility, and I also learned that all trauma doesn’t have to be life altering if you learn from it. So often, people in my generation grew up parenting their siblings and then became parents themselves in their 20s. For some, watching children or being a parental figure was what they knew so it’s what they did. That’s where the gratitude for having to watch my brother comes, because I used to say he was all the birth control I needed. This generation that we are in now is dealing with that traditional responsibility differently than we did. They’re growing up at a much more rapid pace than we did, and I feel like it’s because a lot of babies are raising babies. Kids aren’t allowed to be kids therefore not making mistakes and learning like they’re supposed to instead they’re making mistakes, life altering mistakes and having to live with them. It isn’t just the responsibilities given to them at home though, the world around us plays a pretty heavy part as well.

Youth today are seeing and being exposed to a lot of things that they shouldn’t at a young age. It’s happening on social media, at school, on TV and in other places that parents have no control over. Add that to the fact that they are going through some seriously traumatizing stuff, forcing them to have an adult-like mindset because no child can deal with living on their own and having to provide for not only themselves but their siblings also all on their own. As well as the youth are out here dressing and acting like adults putting themselves in real adult situations that can go wrong. Police now have to get involved and now the police are treating them like adults and not the kids that they are.

Imagine being that inner child locked inside this shell of a being just wanting to be a kid again. It’s hard isn’t it? That’s why this project holds so much importance to me, people need to hear the stories of these youth and understand trauma from their point of view because they are the future.

Little experiences that add up to trauma

By Naja "Star" McComb | Trauma Trooper

Spending several months interviewing youth about their trauma has made me think about my own life differently. Hearing different perspectives brought to life through their stories has made me reflect on the things in my life that I’m just now realizing are effects of trauma. A lot of times we don’t realize that our experiences add up to trauma. We might not even know we have it. So many young people don’t realize that small experiences can lead to large trauma. Being a child and struggling and watching your parents struggling and having to eat what they call “struggle meals” can be traumatizing. Eating ramen, or pork and beans, or rice with sugar over and over again because there is nothing else to eat isn’t always looked at as trauma. But it can be.

When I was a child, I didn’t see my experiences as traumatic. Now, as an adult, having those foods, like noodles, that I had to eat so much as a kid because that’s all my mom could afford, triggers all the emotions that are attached to that situation. In the interviews I conducted this summer, I talked with a lot of young people who didn’t know what trauma was or how to face it or what really triggers it in their life. I felt I had to dig around and ask questions and really open up on my end to show how broad perspective of trauma could be.

Last week, I gave birth to my first child, a baby girl. Before she was born, I was so nervous, anxious, and excited all at the same time. I was scared because my daughter was protected inside of me then. I knew that as soon as she was born, there would be a limit to how much I could protect her.

I conducted these interviews to learn. I want to try to prevent my daughter from feeling as much trauma as possible. But I can’t control the world. I will just have to guide her as I try to guide the young people I work with in the community as we all navigate through the maze of life.
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City of Lakes

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“OUR Truth, Through OUR EYES”
A youth PhotoVoice exhibit focused on trauma, primarily youth trauma, captured and curated by youth artists

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Youth Photo Journalist
Yash Mangalick

Opening Night
10/25/2018
5:30 PM-8:00 PM
THE KENNEDY BUILDING
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North News Journalist
Myesha Powel

Light appetizers and complimentary beverage bar
North News teaches a journalism class at North High. In September, our young journalists practiced their interviewing and photography skills, culminating in this project which asked each of them to interview a peer, and bring their lives to life in just one simple quote. Here are three of their submissions. Find the rest on the North News Facebook Page.

**Student journalists document each other's humanity**

*North News*

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**Frank Blount**

Frank Blount is a sophomore at North High School. He is an African American, was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, and came to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2011. His favorite rapper is NBA YoungBoy and his favorite song is "Solar Eclipse." He wants to make himself and his mother proud. He is a young boy with big dreams.

“When I was in middle school, I use to play around a lot, but now I take everything serious. When I came to high school, I thought if you play a lot, you might not get nowhere. ...I wouldn’t have a good resume or my mom might kick me out of the house for not coming to school. My mom wants me to get my high school diploma and go to college. I want to make myself and my mom proud [by] finishing up high school on the honor roll and going to college to achieve my dream of becoming an FBI agent.”

By Timya Carlisle

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**Imari Vaughn**

Imari Vaughn is senior at North High School. She is a strong black women who embraces her Nigerian culture. She gets her independence from her mom. Her favorite colors are blue and pink.

“My one good friend would say that I’m a good friend and he [would] probably say that I’m sweet and kind and that I mean well when I usually say things, but you have to read in between the lines with me. He [would also] say I’m very reliable and loyal...I’m overprotective....of my friends or anybody that I care about. What makes me happy is my boyfriend, baby sisters when they’re not being annoying, and when the family is together and getting along. [What makes me a good person is] my personality and my eyes. I want to be more mature, I want to be better at saving money. I want to be better at communication [and] probably figuring out that I can’t control everything.”

By DeShawn Davis

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**Eddie Beamon**

Eddie Beamon is a North High senior. He’s an African American man who grew up in Minneapolis. His favorite hobbies are listening to music and watching movies. His favorite color is red because it shows strength and leadership.

“I was raised here in Minnesota. [I] moved to Atlanta back around 2010 for a little while and came back here around 2011. I want to be an actor when I get older. If not an actor, then I want to be a photographer. I chose those two because [with] acting you can really express yourself on a larger scale. I love cameras because you can capture that moment. You can look at a picture and think about a whole story. …I hate when people don’t clean. I can’t deal with mess. Everything in my room [is] folded up, put to the side. A place I want to visit is Madagascar. One dream I haven’t yet accomplished is going to Times Square.”

By Andrianna Bynum

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By Timya Carlisle
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Our Office
227 Colfax Ave N Suite 230
Minneapolis, MN 55405
612 588 7821

**NEW DAY LOAN**
an alternative to payday loans

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*Data from the Payday Lending Health Impact Assessment Fact Sheet

$15.00 is for each $100 borrowed*

**NEW DAY LOAN**
Traditional Payday Loans

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6pm - 7pm. On Fridays, youth open boxing is offered for conditioning. Each session ends with a healthy meal. Boxing drills, technique work, running and strength exercises the city can make in increasing participation of women-owned and minority-owned businesses in City of Minneapolis contracts.

What’s Up 612 is an online resource for children and youth, ages 5-21, where citywide after school activities can be found. More information can be found at http://www.whatsup612.com

The City of Minneapolis offers free energy efficiency home visits and 0% financing on recommended energy-saving upgrades while funding lasts to qualified households with a family income less than $94,300.

Homeowners and renters can call 651-328-6220 or visit mnco.gov/energy for information on how to schedule a visit.

Pillsbury United Communities’ Oak Park Center (1701 Oak Park Ave N) hosts free community dinners on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5pm-7pm.

Donations and volunteering are needed for PCYC’s Annual Holiday Gift Sale on Dec. 8. For more information contact Catrice O’Neal, 612-643-2016 or giftsale@pcycmpls.org.

EVENTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Ongoing Thursdays – 11am-1pm, Community Coffee & Conversation. Get to know neighbors and enjoy complimentary beverages. All are welcome. Serendipity Spot (3300 Lyndale Ave N).

Mondays – Sign up for a weekly 30-minute session to practice reading and do literacy activities with a teen mentor. 2pm-5pm. Visit or call the Webber Park Library to register 612-543-6751. Sponsored by the Webber Park Friends. For kids entering grades K-3.

Fridays – Family Storytime. 10-11am. Webber Park Library. For children of all ages and their parent or caregiver. Talk, sing, read, write and play together in a format appropriate for young children. Share books, stories, rhymes, music and movement.


9:29 – Healing Circles: Moving Away From Harmful Behaviors. 3pm-5pm. Webber Park Library. Healing Circles are safe spaces for people affected by trauma to come together to connect, to be heard and to be supported. A mental health practitioner from The Zen Bin will lead this series of programs that will include Healing Circle conversations and self-care strategies. If you are in need of childcare, please call Webber Park Library in advance of each session at 612-543-6750 to reserve a spot.

9/29-11/10 – Juxtaposition Arts is excited to present the work of South African artist Kealeboga Tlalang in his first U.S. solo exhibition. Working in mixed media collage, Tlalang creates beautiful textual portraits that link puzzle and play to synthesize his love for mathematics, science, and art. Kealeboga Tlalang will be on view at the JXTA Emerson Gallery from Sept. 24 - Nov. 10. The exhibition opening is on Sept. 29; Tlalang will lead an artist talk on Oct. 4. For more information visit juxtapositionarts.org.

9/29 – Comedy in Your Community. 7pm-8:30pm. Webber Park Library. Local comic Brandi Brown will present a variety comedy show featuring some of her favorite Twin Cities funny people and interviews with you. Hennepin County Library staff. Stop by to submit questions for the guest staff appearances. This free event will take place after library hours. Doors open 30 minutes before start time. Suggested ages: 16+.

The shows are in ADA compliant spaces and will have live-captioning.

10/4 – Healing Circles: Mental Health 101/Positive Lifestyle. 6:30pm-8pm. Webber Park Library. Healing Circles are safe spaces for people affected by trauma to come together to connect, to be heard and to be supported. A mental health practitioner from The Zen Bin will lead this series of programs that will include Healing Circle conversations and self-care strategies. If you are in need of childcare, please call Webber Park Library in advance of each session at 612-543-6750 to reserve a spot.

10/6 – Healing Stories. 2pm-2:45pm. Webber Park Library. Master Storyteller Nothando Zulu will share stories for all ages. Witness how stories communicate important legacies and lessons about strength, resilience and healing.

10/10 – Senior Surf Day. 10am-12pm at Webber Park Library. Learn computer basics, how to navigate and search the Internet and how to access websites of interest to seniors. Get hands-on computer experience with help from representatives of the Senior LinkAge Line. Registration required. Register online or at 612-543-KNOW.

10/13 – Stories Together with Drag Performers. 10am-10:30am. Webber Park Library. Celebrate self-expression, dress up, and gender fluidity through stories, rhymes, music and movement with drag performers from our community. These events will be a safe, positive, and encouraging space for children and caregivers to express themselves in an open environment. Kids event.

10/13 – The People’s University. 2:30pm-4pm. Webber Park Library. The People’s University uses open-access syllabuses as tools to help us learn together through reading, multi-media viewing, and discussion about the historic contexts for the world we find ourselves in today. In this series, the University of Minnesota Immigration Syllabus will help us better understand U.S. immigration history, xenophobia, deportation policy, and border policing.

10/16 – Author Talk: Curt Brown, 6:30pm-7:30pm. This program takes place at North Market’s Community Meeting Room. Minnesota journalist and author Brown will talk about and read from his recently published book, “Minneapolis, 1918: When Flu, Fire, and War Ravaged the State.”

10/17 – What’s New for Medicare? 1pm-2pm. Webber Park Library. It is important to review your Medicare prescription drug plan each year during the Open Enrollment period, from Oct. 15-Dec. 7. The Metro Area Agency on Aging will explain how Part D works, including the impact of the Affordable Care Act on “the donut hole.” Extra Help, a program for people with lower incomes, that may reduce prescription drug costs, will be explained. Collaborators: Metro Area Agency on Aging, Minneapolis Community Education.

10/20 – Explore Nature! 10:30am-12:30pm. Webber Park Library. Enjoy nature-themed activities, meet a live critter, and learn about the Minneapolis watershed and our regional ecosystem. Collaborators: North Mississippi River Regional Park, Minneapolis Watershed Management Organization. Kids event.

10/20 – Teen Geekery Club. 1pm - 3pm. Webber Park Library. Are you an anime and manga fan? A cosplayer? A fan of Doctor Who, Steven Universe, Voltron, Gravity Falls, Homestuck, Supernatural or other fictional works? If yes to any of these, Teen Geekery Club is for you! Watch anime, create and share your artwork, and discuss your favorite fandoms. All fandoms welcome! Sponsors: Friends of the Hennepin County Library, Anime Twin Cities, Grades 6-12.

10/23 – Neighborhood Knowledge Book Club. 7pm–8pm. Webber Park Library. The shows are in ADA compliant spaces and will have live-captioning.

10/5-12/1 – This fall, Minneapolis collective MPD150 presents “Making It Real: Our History with Police and Our Future Without Them,” an art exhibition exploring the power and possibility of a police-free community at New Rules (2015 Lowry Ave N). The exhibit will feature new work from Jacob Yeates, Sishir Bommakanti, Aja Marie Usrey, Ali Abdrahaman, and Sophea Ek. Organized into “past,” “present,” and “future” sections, the exhibit follows the narrative arc of MPD150’s 2017 report—a community-led performance review of the Minneapolis Police Department on the 150th anniversary of its founding. The exhibit’s opening event, which includes performances and a panel discussion, is 10/5, 6pm-10pm. The closing event is 10/21, 1pm-5pm, at New Rules and includes community discussion and resource sharing.

10/30 – J.D. Steele leads the Capri Glee! Adult Community Choir in concert at 7pm. Free at the Capri. The concert will also feature two guest choirs, the Mill City Singers and the MacPhail Community Youth Choir, and combined choir numbers.

September 27, 2018
Then, get planting!

Toms: Increased woodpecker activity, chewing dam-
removing and replacing it. Look for these EAB symp-
chances of your trees surviving and optimizing the ef-
to take action. Have a certified arborist inspect your
Valley, MN.

Then, get planting!

The City of Minneapolis Health Department has
completed an evaluation of the temporary green-
way installed on Irving Avenue North from June
2016-May 2017 to find out how a greenway could
work on housing issues. Applications can be found at:
http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards/openings/
WCMSP-213737

Emerald Ash Borer was recently found in Golden
Valley, MN. Because EAB is in the area, don’t wait
to take action. Have a certified arborist inspect your
tree, even if it looks healthy. You vastly improve the
chances of your trees surviving and optimizing the ef-
ficacy of the treatment when you act early. Plus,
treating an infected tree is much less expensive than
removing and replacing it. Look for these EAB symp-
toms: Increased woodpecker activity, chewing dam-
age on edges of leaves, d-shaped holes in the bark,
bark splitting or S-shaped tunnels beneath the bark,
canopy dieback that typically begins in the top one-
third of the canopy, multiple sprouts of new growth at
the trunk, and missing buds on the outer limbs of the
trees. If treating your tree isn’t an option and your tree
needs to be removed, do so quickly to reduce the risk.
Then, get planting!
When we’re traumatized, we think we’re too heavy to lift up.

Men's advocate Manu Lewis lives and works on the frontlines of community pain.

By Daija Triplett | Photos by David Pierini

When Manu Lewis' works with new clients at NorthPoint Health and Wellness, he shows them a laminated copy of his criminal record. Then he shows them an even thicker stack of documents: all the awards and certifications he has received since making a lifestyle change in 2010.

The catalyst for his shift was his cousin’s death, a homicide that took place on Lewis’ 40th birthday. His grief and regret opened his eyes to other possibilities. Prior to that he had been repeatedly incarcerated. He had experienced deep pain and many deaths. He realized how much healing he had to do.

Though he’s made dramatic changes in his life, and he works as an advocate for others trying to do the same, his days are still filled with trauma - “generational, historical, personal, and perceived.” He is a “soul medic” for the Department of Health. He does Gang Violence Intervention work, and he is also a community engagement expert for the Minneapolis Police Department.

This month he spoke with North News about trauma – how it manifests in violence, how we live with it, and how we begin to heal from it.

Lewis shows his clients evidence of his past mistakes (his criminal record) and his efforts to continue his education through certificates and trainings.
What is trauma to you? I define trauma as unexpected situations and circumstances that happen too often, too much, and too fast to process. There is generational trauma which is historic, and personal trauma which happens to us directly. We feel it down in the marrow of our bones. When trauma is not dealt with or addressed, the experience takes on another life inside a person.

You are a “soul medic” and counselor. How did you start working with people who experience trauma?

On Jan 20, 2010, my cousin was murdered on my 40th birthday. I decided to make a lifestyle change. Seven days later I started to co-facilitate a twelve step self-help recovery program called Criminals and Gang Members Anonymous. I facilitated that particular group for five years. After the tornado, I started working at the Neighborhood Hub. I realized I had more trauma to work on.

How does the Northside community experience trauma? My mother always tells me about how from the apartment that they lived in on Sheridan where I was born, she was able to look right down Plymouth and see the riots. The riots were not the start of trauma in our community but they were a defining moment where a lot of the social norms changed. North Minneapolis experiences a high range of traumatic incidences based on the culture. The low end of North Minneapolis was designated as a negro slum. Then you have the political landscape where certain resources and opportunities aren’t provided to the community. I think North Minneapolis has been and continues to be traumatized in a lot of identifiable ways and a lot of other ways that are very subtle.

How do you think people should cope with their trauma? Everyone has different coping mechanisms, but some people don’t cope with trauma. First, it’s important to recognize exactly some of the things that have happened. I share with a lot of my guys that it’s not their fault. Certain things have not happened to them because they are defective. I try to shine a different light if possible on the things that have happened and find other means to engage in life.

If people have different ways of coping, what is your starting point with a person who has experienced trauma? First to identify and recognize the situation in reality. There has never been anyone born who didn’t pass away. How people pass away and how we receive their passing is totally different. I have experienced a high volume of deaths in my family and friends circle. I may see and experience someone passing now differently than someone who hasn’t lost anyone. It’s not new to me. First I start with recognizing my feelings and my response. Then I find some alternate solutions to internalizing them where they fester. We lost four individuals in the community in one weekend last month. It was traumatic to the community, but everybody responded differently. We have some people saying we should be in a state of emergency right now.

Do you think there are enough trauma-related resources in our community? No. Trauma-informed care has become a cliché, sexy, romantic term. A lot of money is being said to go toward helping individuals with trauma, but most of that money really in all actuality does not meet the people and is not supportive of the people unless you’re doing direct service with them.

How do we stop violence in our community? Be engaged. Talk to people. My nephew used to say “sharing is caring.” Violence is a symptom of something else. When you lack resources and opportunities and you’re marginalized people, those same individuals will take it upon themselves to create a new culture – whether it’s robbing, stealing, or selling dope, it doesn’t matter. What I do with a lot of young men is apologize. I apologize for taking part in a destructive lifestyle that they inherited. These young men have images of us and what we do and then they take it to the next level. I apologize for being a negative influence.

How do we guide our youth to avoid the violence that has unfolding in north Minneapolis? Open communication. Asking. Being attentive to our young people, especially the ones going through things. I know we should listen more to youth. A lot of the answers we’re looking for come from [them].

How can police and youth develop better relationships with each other? One of the most important things you can do with the youth is engage them. Most of our youth, they see the uniform, not a human being.

How police engage makes them a human being. Yesterday I was driving down Penn. There was this lady officer; she was playing basketball with some young men. That engagement can stop a lot. It’s those small interactions that have a culturally rippling effect on the community.

Who inspires you to keep going? In ’87 when I got locked up, there was a sheriff who helped me get my GED. He told me education was free and never to stop learning. He was a white dude who showed me I could keep going. Since 2010, I have acquired at least 35 certificates and trainings.

How do you deal with your trauma day to day? Self care is mandatory, especially for people working with people through trauma. Trauma is transferable. It’s very important to have self care so we can stay healthy. I like getting outside and riding around the lakes. I’m an Aquarius; I have to be around water. Change is inevitable. Yesterday we lost one of our NorthPoint coworkers to cancer. Yesterday was a doozy. Today was okay. I’m not even tripping about tomorrow.
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